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**UTILITY
PATENT APPLICATION
TRANSMITTAL**

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 36968/202435

First Inventor Robert A. Koch

Title Shared Communication Presence Information

Express Mail Label No. EL513162266US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☐ Applicant claims small entity status.
See 37 CFR 1.27.
3. ☒ Specification [Total Pages] 30
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
- Descriptive title of the invention
- Cross Reference to Related Applications
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
- Reference to sequence listing, a table,
or a computer program listing appendix
- Background of the Invention
- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure
4. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets] 8
5. ☒ Oath or Declaration [Total Pages] 3
a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63 (d))
b. ☐ (for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
i. ☐ **DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s)
named in the prior application, see 37 CFR
1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b)
6. ☒ Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.76

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7. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R in duplicate, large table or
Computer Program (Appendix)
8. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
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a. ☐ Computer Readable Form (CRF)
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ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

9. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
10. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of
(when there is an assignee) Attorney
11. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
12. ☐ Information Disclosure ☐ Copies of IDS
Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 Citations
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(Should be specifically itemized)
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17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment,
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of prior application No.:

Prior application information:

Examiner

Group / Art Unit:

For CONTINUATION OR DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under
Box 5b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference.
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FEE TRANSMITTAL for FY 2001

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First Named Inventor Robert A. Koch
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METHOD OF PAYMENT

1. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayments to:

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Deposit Account Name KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP

- ☒ Charge Any Additional Fee Required Under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17

☐ Applicant claims small entity status See 37 CFR 1.27

2. ☒ Payment Enclosed:

☒ Check ☐ Credit card ☐ Money Order ☐ Other

FEE CALCULATION

1. BASIC FILING FEE

Large Entity Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
101	710	201	355	Utility filing fee	710
106	320	206	160	Design filing fee	
107	490	207	245	Plant filing fee	
108	710	208	355	Reissue filing fee	
114	150	214	75	Provisional filing fee	

SUBTOTAL (1) (\$) 710

2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES

Total Claims	Extra Claims	Fee from below	Fee Paid
36	-20** = 16	X 18 =	288
3	-3** = 0	X 80 =	0
Multiple Dependent			

Large Entity Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description
103	18	203	9	Claims in excess of 20
102	80	202	40	Independent claims in excess of 3
104	270	204	135	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid
109	80	209	40	** Reissue independent claims over original patent
110	18	210	9	** Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) (\$) 288

**or number previously paid, if greater, For Reissues, see above

FEE CALCULATION (continued)

3. ADDITIONAL FEES

Large Entity Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
105	130	205	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	
127	50	227	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	
139	130	139	130	Non-English specification	
147	2,520	147	2,520	For filing a request for ex parte reexamination	
112	920*	112	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	
113	1,840*	113	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
115	110	215	55	Extension for reply within first month	
116	390	216	195	Extension for reply within second month	
117	890	217	445	Extension for reply within third month	
118	1,390	218	695	Extension for reply within fourth month	
128	1,890	228	945	Extension for reply within fifth month	
119	310	219	155	Notice of Appeal	
120	310	220	155	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	
121	270	221	135	Request for oral hearing	
138	1,510	138	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	
140	110	240	55	Petition to revive - unavoidable	
141	1,240	241	620	Petition to revive - unintentional	
142	1,240	242	620	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	
143	440	243	220	Design issue fee	
144	600	244	300	Plant issue fee	
122	130	122	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	
123	50	123	50	Petitions related to provisional applications	
126	240	126	240	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt	
581	40	581	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	
146	710	246	355	Filing a submission after final rejection (37 CFR § 1.129(a))	
149	710	249	355	For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR § 1.129(b))	
179	710	279	355	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	
169	900	169	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application	

Other fee (specify) _____

* Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBTOTAL (3) (\$)

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Signature			

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APPLICATION INFORMATION

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Title Line Two:: N
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Application Type:: Utility
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Registration Number One:: 36348

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Patent Application No. 2024/0123456

SHARED COMMUNICATION PRESENCE INFORMATION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates in general to the field of communications, and in particular, to the field of providing communications presence information.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 The telecommunications industry has experienced explosive growth in recent years. A portion of this growth has been driven by the need for individuals and corporations to be in constant, if not immediate, contact with each other. In the past, individuals were satisfied using a wireline telephone that was hardwired and associated with a building or location. As society has become more mobile, users demand telephones and access to information that travels with them sparking the evolution of wireless telephone service.

15 This need to be in constant communication has aided the development of additional wireless devices, such as, standard and interactive pagers and wireless computers. Electronic mail (Email) which was initially marketed as a way to achieve a paperless environment, has grown to become an additional communications medium with users sometimes choosing to
20 send an Email message instead of or in addition to placing a voice telephone call.

 Recently, wireless hand-held devices that function as a cross between a telephone and a computer have grown in popularity. These devices allow a user to receive Email and text messages, as well as data on a variety of subjects such as, for instance, stock quotes from remote sources.

The Internet is a global communications system of linked computers and file servers providing users connected to the Internet information on a practically unlimited number of subjects. Most users connect to the Internet via wireline telephone connections using a personal computer, a modem and services of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) through which access to the Internet is provided. Recently devices have become available that allow remote wireless access to the Internet.

With the multitude of communications devices available, it has become exceedingly difficult to determine which communications device is being used by a party. Choices of communications devices can include, wireline telephones, wireless telephones, pagers, Email and Internet appliances. Thus one may have to try to connect to numerous communications devices before reaching the desired party. Additionally contact attempts may be made to a party at home, work, via an instant message, or via the Internet.

Accordingly, a need exists for systems and methods for presenting the status of communications devices of a user. In addition, a need exists for systems and methods for contacting a user once their communications presence has been determined.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention addresses the problems describes above by providing systems and methods for a shared communication presence information for identifying the communications presence of a member of a communications circle. Upon determining the communications presence of a member of the communications circle, that member can be immediately

contacted. Both real time and non-real time communication can occur with a member of the communications circle.

Membership in the communications circle is established by a member completing a profile using an Internet web-based form. The profile is stored in a customer profiles database.

5 A communications server translates the profile information into a unique code number for each member's profile. A collection of code numbers completes the requirement for membership in the communications circle.

The system includes a communications initiator adapted to route a contact data message through a communications network to connect to the Internet, a communications server, a database storing information regarding members of the communications circle, and member devices adapted to connect to the Internet. For example, the communications circle will consist of members A and B. The profiles and communications circles form the basis for B's ability to identify A's communications presence status so that B can choose the best method of communication to initiate communication with A. The communications server maintains a profile of all communications equipment associated with each member. When B chooses to initiate a communication with A, the communications server checks all devices listed in A's profile to determine if those devices are available. Devices can include but is not limited to, for example, a wireline telephone, a wireless telephone, an interactive pager, electronic messaging, an interactive television (TV), a personal computer (PC) having dial-up access to the Internet or a Pocket PC. Upon completion of a check of all A's communication devices, the communications server returns to an Internet web interface a presentation indicating the communications presence of A's communications devices. The results are displayed based on

current time of day and day of week using A's profile information. B can determine the best way to contact A considering current the time of day and day of week. B has several options for contacting A including initiating a telephone call to A, sending A an instant message and/or an Email message, leaving A a voice mail message or paging A.

5 In a first embodiment, the member of the communications circle can be contacted on a wireless voice and/or Short Message Service (SMS) communications device coupled to the Internet.

In a second embodiment, the member of the communications circle can be contacted on a wireline voice device coupled to the Internet.

In a third embodiment, the member of the communications circle can be contacted on a wireline data device coupled to the Internet.

In a fourth embodiment, the member of the communications circle can be contacted on a wireless Email and/or interactive pager device coupled to the Internet.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of the specification, illustrate preferred embodiments of the present invention and, together with the description, disclose the principles of the invention. In the drawings:

20 Figure 1 is an overview diagram of an architecture of a shared communication presence information system in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

Figure 2 is an illustrative view of a personalized Internet interface that provides a display and access to the system of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is an example of a screen display showing profile information for a member of the communications circle identified on a portion of the screen of Figure 2.

Figure 4 is a diagram of an architecture for establishing the user profiles of Figure 3.

Figure 5 is an illustration of an architecture for a wireless voice communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1.

Figure 6 is an illustration of an architecture for a wireline voice communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1.

Figure 7 is an illustration of an architecture for a wireline data communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1.

Figure 8 is an illustration of an architecture for a wireless Email and pager communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference will now be made in detail to preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.

I. Overview of Systems and Methods

Figure 1 is an overview diagram of an architecture for providing a shared communication presence information system 12 in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the invention. The system 12 includes a user utilizing any one of several communications initiators 14 to determine the communications presence of a member of their communications

circle. Upon determining the communications presence of a member of the communications circle, that member can be immediately contacted utilizing this system 12.

The architecture includes the communications initiator 14 adapted to connect to the Internet 16, a processor 18, for instance a communications server, a customer profiles database 21, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) 20 and a plurality of people and contact devices (collectively referred to as contacts) 22 reachable through the Internet 16.

The communications initiator 14 can be any type of device that can connect to the Internet 16. As shown in Figure 1, the communications initiator 14 can be a wireline telephone 24 connected to a telephone company central office 25 and a voice XML gateway 25 that provides an interface to the Internet 16, a WAP-enabled telephone 26 connected to a WAP gateway 27 providing access to the Internet 16, a two-way alpha pager 28 such as an interactive pager, and a personal computer (PC) 30 adapted to communicate directly with the Internet 16.

For the purposes of this description, the communications initiator 14 will be the PC 30 that accesses the Internet 16 through the ISP 20. Accordingly, the screen shots and interfaces shown for the communications initiator 14 are PC-based and represent those from a web browser. It should be understood that the screen shots and interfaces for the communications initiator 14 will vary with the type of device. For example, the WAP-enabled telephone 26 would have smaller and more concise displays than that of the PC 30.

The contacts or contact devices 22 include any type of communications or data device.

The contact devices include but are not limited to, for instance, a wireline telephone 32, an interactive television (TV) 34, a PC 36 having dial-up or DSL access, a Pocket PC 38, other suitable hand-held mobile communications or data devices, an interactive pager 40, a wireless

communications circle 74. For instance, member of the communications circle 74 can be identified by name, picture, potential presence location and type of equipment used.

A user may choose to verify presence information for a member of their communications circle 74 by clicking or otherwise selecting that person, for instance, member Gwen 76. In this example, Gwen 76 has at least a mobile telephone. An example of additional identifying information regarding Gwen 76 is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 is an example of a screen display of an interface 80 showing profile information 82 for Gwen 76, a member of the communications circle identified on a portion of the screen of Figure 2. The profile information 82 is displayed by clicking on tab displaying the term "My Contacts" 84 shown on the screen display 80. Any number of other features can be accessed by clicking their respective tabs, for instance, "My Calendar" 86, "My News & Information" 88, "Communications Log" 90, "My BellSouth Services" 92, "My Communications Preferences" 94 and "My Messages" 94.

By clicking on the tab My Contacts 84, a screen is opened and displays the profile information 82 for Gwen 76. Additionally, a photograph 112 of Gwen 76 can be displayed. For illustrative purposes, the profile information 82 includes the following information about Gwen 76: (1) title of Program Manager 98; (2) name of her company, Peak Communications 100; (3) her work, mobile and facsimile telephone numbers 102, 104 and 106; (4) her interactive pager address 108; and (5) her Email address 110. This profile information 82 can include and resemble information contained on a traditional business card. Information listed in the profile will be gathered by the communications server 18 to determine which of the types of contact devices 22 associated with Gwen 76 are connected to the system 12 and activated or

available to receive a contact or telephone call. The communications server 18 gathers communications presence information 107 on each contact device 22 prior to displaying its current accessibility, as shown in the lower portion of the interface 80 of Figure 3.

Once the server collects communications presence information 107 on all devices 22, the communication initiator 14 intelligently determines the best way to contact Gwen 76. In the example shown in Figure 3, Gwen's mobile telephone 104, interactive pager 108, voice mail for work 102, and Email 110 are active (i.e. turned on). The communications presence information 107 is preferably time of day and day of week specific. That is, the communications initiator 14 can receive information relevant for the current day. Thus, at the time of the display of the My Contacts 84 information, Gwen 76 is accessible by mobile telephone, interactive pager, voice mail and Email. Gwen's mobile telephone and interactive pager can be accessed by clicking on one of the tabs "connect" 114, 116. To connect to Gwen 76 via voice mail, clicking the tab "Click to Dial" 118 will dial to ring Gwen's 76 telephone, for instance, her work telephone 102 to leave her a voice mail message. An Email message can be sent to Gwen 76 by clicking the tab "Send E-Mail" 120 to connect to Gwen's electronic mail.

II. Shared Communications Presence Information System Setup

A. Establishing Profiles and Communications Circles

Figure 4 is a diagram of an illustrative architecture 200 for establishing the user profiles, such as those shown in Figure 3. For simplicity, Figure 4 shows only two parties, A 204 and B 202, who are members of a communications circle 74 and wish to communicate with each

other. However, this invention is not limited to only two members of a communications circle 74.

In this example, Party A 204 and Party B 202 choose to be members of a common communications circle. To facilitate communications between A 204 and B 202, they both complete a profiles form accessible on a web page or by using the personalized Internet interface 70. Parties who wish to be members of the communications circle 74 can include a variety of information on their contact devices 22 and when they are available through the contact devices 22. An example of information included in the profile for A 204 is shown below in Table 1.

Home Telephone Number	7042540010	M-F 6P- 10P Sa-Su
Work Telephone Number	7043450020	M-F 8A-5P
Mobile Telephone Number	8283334434	
SMS Address	8283334434@company.com	
Email Address	custa@bellsouth.net	
AlphaPager Address	custa@bellsouthips.net	
Mobitex Access Number	15254678	
Internet DN	7042540010	

Table 1.

Table 1 shows an example of possible profile data that can be stored on A 204. For example, the profile can contain telephone numbers and time of day or day of week that a member will be available at that particular telephone number.

Both A 204 and B 202 complete a profile 205, 207 that is stored in the customer profiles database 21. The communications server 18 generates a random and unique code number for each profile and assigns a code number to each profile 205, 207 stored in the customer profiles database 21. The profiles for A 204 and B 202 are stored in the customer profile database 21 that is coupled to the communications server 18. Each party's communications circle 74 includes code numbers for each member of the communications circle 74. B 202 establishes his communications circle 74 by logging into the communications server 18 to create his communications circle 74 using a form on a web page. The form asks, for instance, for the code numbers for each customer to be included in the circle 74. Table 2 below shows a sample communications circle 74 for B 202.

Code Number for A
Code Number for C
Code Number for D

Table 2.

A 204 creates a similar communications circle 75. The completed communications circles 74, 75 are stored in the customer profiles database 21. A communications circle for A 203 could include the code numbers for B, E, and F. For B 202 and A 204 to know each other's presence, they exchange code numbers with each other. Further, A 204 and B 202 identify a list of code numbers for members of their communications circle 74. For example, B

202 may want to add A 204 to their circle, as well as, for instance, members C and D, for whom B 202 also knows their code numbers. In addition to exchanging code numbers, parties may also exchange passwords, a key, or other information in order to allow access to each other's profile information. Thus, the communications server 18 may not add someone to a communications circle unless they have the password, key, or other information that proves the party has been given authorization to the party's profile information.

The communications server 18 maintains a profile of all communications equipment associated with each member. When B 202 chooses to initiate a communication with A 204, the communications server 18 checks all contact devices 22 listed in A's profile 205 to determine if those devices 22 are available. Upon completion of a check of all A's contact devices 22, the communications server 18 returns to the Internet web interface 70 a presentation indicating the communications presence of A's contact devices 22. The results are displayed based on current time of day and day of week using A's profile information. B 202 can determine the best way to contact A 204 considering the displayed information. B 204 has the option to initiate a telephone call to A 204, to send A 204 an instant message, to send an Email message, to leave A 204 a voice mail message, or to page A 204.

When B 202 wishes to initiate a communication with A 204, B 202 can use a PC 30 as the communication initiator 14. The PC 30 has dial-up access that connects to the central office 206 and the central office 206 has a signal switching point (CO/SSP) forming part of the Advanced Intelligent Network (AIN) capabilities. The CO/SSP 206 switches the contact data message to the ISP 20 to connect the request to the Internet 16. The contact data message is routed through the Internet 16 through a secure intranet 17 to the communications server 18

with an indicator, such as a button on the web interface that permits B 202 to click the button to send an Email message to A's Short Message Service (SMS) Email address, thus sending a text message to A's mobile telephone 204. SMS is a specific instance of data communications unique to a wireless device that allows an email based text message to be sent to that device.

5 If A's wireless telephone 44 is not on or is not recognized by the HLR 209, the communications server 18 can return an option on the web interface 80 to leave A 204 a voice mail message. Alternatively, B 202 may receive a standard "out of range" announcement if a telephone call is placed to A 202.

10 C. Wireline Voice Communication

Figure 6 is an illustration of an architecture 211 for a wireline voice communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1. The wireline telephone equipment is always connected to the network. However, while the wireline telephone is connected, A 204 may not be available to answer the wireline telephone. Thus, in checking A's communications presence, it is important to identify what time of the day and/or day of the week A 204 is 15 available at the wireline telephone.

B 202 would like to initiate a communication with A 204. B 202 uses a PC 30 as the communication initiator 14. The PC 30 has dial-up access that connects to the central office/signal switching point 206 that switches the telephone call to the ISP 20 to connect the 20 request to the Internet 16. The request routes through the Internet 16 to the communications server 18 adapted to communicate with and retrieve profile and communications circle 74, 75

information from a customer profiles database 21. The communications server 18 routes the request through the Internet 16 to the ISP 20 utilized by A 204.

The home or work telephone numbers for A 204 can be displayed to B 202 based on the current time of day and day of the week. For example, A 204 may not actually be at the displayed telephone number, but A 204 has, in effect, stated a preference to B 202, by the hours listed in Table 1 as reach telephone numbers for telephone calls to a wireline telephone.

Alternatively, A 204 can set a forward-to number in their profile, for instance, if A 204 is out of town. In another alternative, A 204 can run a web-based calendar application on the communications server 18 that can automatically update reach telephone numbers based on calendar events. B 202 can initiate a call to A 204 via an Internet Telephony PC client, for example, Microsoft NetMeeting. Alternatively, B 202 can initiate a traditional voice telephone call to A 204.

D. Wireline Data Communication

Figure 7 is an illustration of an architecture 214 for a wireline data communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1. The architecture includes PCs 30, 36, an ISP 20 for connecting with the Internet 16, the Internet 16, communications server 18, customer profiles database 21, SCP 216, and contact devices 22 utilized by A 204. A 204 has access to a number of dial-up Internet access equipment, for example, a PC 36, an Internet appliance 218, a Television (TV) browser 34, and Pocket PC 38.

The Internet appliance 218 typically includes a monitor, a keyboard or other input device, and a modem for connecting to the Internet 16 and receiving Email messages.

Normally, no processor is provided and the Internet appliance 218 does not include computer programs such as Microsoft Word. A suitable Internet appliance is model I-opener by Netpliance of Austin, Texas. Product information is available at www.netpliance.com.

WebTV Networks, Inc. a subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation makes a suitable television browser 34 for connecting to the Internet 16. Product information is available at www.webtv.com. All of these devices have access to the Internet 16, browsing capabilities and connects to the ISP 20 to connect the request to the Internet 16. Once the dial-up device is connected to the Internet 16 the communications server 18 is aware of the presence of the contact device 22 and the contact devices 22 can receive Email messages or an instant message.

1. DN/IP Address Setup

Figure 7 shows a an architecture 214 for establishing an Internet dial number and Internet Protocol address for the system of Figure 1 to determine the presence of the dial-up devices. B 202 uses a PC 30 as the communication initiator 14. The PC 30 has dial-up access to dial into the central office 206 having a SSP software and AIN capabilities. AIN service operates beyond just the switch, allowing communications service providers to build their own services and are not limited to services offered by the switch manufacturer. Additionally, AIN provides for triggers that interrupt processing a call into the SSP and sends the call using signaling system 7 (SS7) 220, a telephony protocol, to the service control point (SCP) 216. The SCP 216 performs a query outside of the switch and instructs the switch how to process the call.

When A 204 terminates an Internet 16 session, the SSP sends a TCAP AIN 0.1 message to the SCP 216 containing A's Internet DN. Upon receipt of the TCAP AIN 0.1 message, the SCP 216 clears the DN/IP address pair from its database.

2. Determining A's Communications Presence

In the example shown in Figure 7, A 204 could be on a number of different possible types of dial-up Internet access equipment. The communications server 18 queries the SCP 216, based on the Internet DN in A's profile, via the TCP/IP 218 to determine whether A 204 has an active IP address. If A 204 has a DN/IP address pair in the SCP 216, then A 204 has an active IP address. The IP address from the address pair is returned to the communications server 18. The communications server 18 displays to B 202 via B's PC 30 that A 204 is on-line and offers B 202 the option to send an Instant Message to A 204 or an Email to A 204.

E. Wireless Email/Pager

Figure 8 is an illustration of an architecture 230 for a wireless Email and pager communication system in accordance with the system of Figure 1. The architecture includes B's PC 30, an ISP 20 for connecting to the Internet 16, the Internet 16, the communications server 18, customer profiles database 21, a MSC 58 coupled to a radio tower 56, and A's pager 40.

To determine the if A's pager 40 is accessible, the communications server 18 sends a query to the wireless data network 232. In response to this query, the wireless data network 232 queries the pager 40 to see if it is activated and can receive a page. The precise way in

which the wireless data network 232 queries the pager 40 will vary with the network 232 itself and the pager 40. As one example, when the pager 40 is an interactive pager manufactured by Research In Motion (RIM) of Waterloo, Ontario, the paging network can ping the pager 40 with an on/off message to see if it is active. The paging network uses the Mobitex Access Number, which is shown above in Table 1, to perform this pinging operation. If the pager 40 is on, then the pager 40 respond to the on/off message with an “on” reply. This querying is transparent to A 204. The wireless data network 232 then responds to the communications server 18 by informing it whether the pager 40 is activated.

The communications server 18 then takes the information learned from the wireless data network 232 to update A’s communications presence. If A’s pager 40 is on, this status is displayed to B 202 via the personalized Internet interface 70 and B 202 is given the option of sending a page to A 204.

An advantage of this invention is that a determination can be intelligently and efficiently made as to which communications equipment associated with a member of a communications circle is activated.

Another advantage of this invention is that once a determination is made that a member of a communications circle has a communications device available, that member can be immediately contacted.

The foregoing description of the preferred embodiments of the invention has been presented only for the purpose of illustration and description and is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching.

The embodiments were chosen and described in order to explain the principles of the invention and their practical application so as to enable others skilled in the art to utilize the invention and various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

CLAIMS

1 1. A method for identifying to a user an availability of members through their
2 contact devices, comprising:
3 storing a profile on each member, the profile identifying at least one contact device for
4 each member;
5 providing information on the profile for each member to the user; and
6 tracking a communications presence of the contact device for each member, the tracking
7 including determining the availability of the contact device for each member.

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing the user to initiate
2 communications with the member through the contact device.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a notification that the
2 contact device associated with each member is active.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising connecting the user to the member
2 having the active contact device.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing a communications circle of
2 members for each user.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the availability of the contact
2 device comprises querying the contact device.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the availability of the contact
2 device comprises querying a network provider associated with the contact device.

1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein allowing the user to initiate communications
2 with the contact device comprises connecting the user to the contact device.

1 9. The method of claim 2, wherein allowing the user to initiate communications
2 with the contact device comprises sending a message to the contact device.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the profile comprises enabling a
2 plurality of contact devices to be stored for each member.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the profile comprises storing addressing
2 information for each contact device.

1 12. A system for facilitating communication between a user and members of a
2 communications circle, comprising:
3 a database for storing profiles of all members of the communications circle, each profile
4 identifying at least one contact device for each member; and

5 a communications server for retrieving the profile from the database and for determining
6 an availability of the contact device for each member in the communications circle, the
7 communications server providing the profile and information on the availability of the contact
8 device to the user upon request;
9 wherein, from the profile and the information on the availability of the user, the user can
10 initiate contact with any one of the members in the communications circle.

1 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the database stores a code number for
2 correlating the profile and communications circle information of the members.

3 14. The system of claim 12, wherein the information on the availability of the
4 contact device indicates if the contact device is active.

5 15. The system of claim 12, wherein the profile includes an address for the contact
6 device.

7 16. The system of claim 12, wherein the communications server connects the user to
8 one of the members in the communications circle.

9 17. The system of claim 16, wherein the communications server connects the user to
10 the one member of the communications circle through the Internet.

1 18. The system of claim 16, wherein the communications server connects the user to
2 the one member of the communications circle through an email message.

1 19. The system of claim 16, wherein the communications server connects the user to
2 the one member of the communications circle through a page sent to the one member.

1 20. The system of claim 16, wherein the contact device of the one member
2 comprises a wireless device and the communications server connects the user to the one
3 member of the communications through a wireless network.

1 21. The system of claim 16, wherein the one member of the communications server
2 has an interactive television and the communications server connects the user to the interactive
3 television of the one member.

1 22. The system of claim 16, wherein the one member of the communications circle
2 has a personal computer with access to the Internet through an internet service provider and the
3 communications server connects the user to the personal computer of the one member.

1 23. The system of claim 16, wherein the communications server connects the user to
2 an Internet appliance of the one member of the communications circle.

1 24. An interface for being provided to a user to display communications presence
2 information on a user's communications circle, comprising:
3 a communications section for displaying the members of the user's communications
4 circle, each member in the communications circle having at least one contact device through
5 which each member may communicate with the user; and
6 a profile section for displaying profile information on each member of the
7 communications circle, the profile information identifying each member, listing contact devices
8 associated with each member, and displaying an availability of each of the contact devices;
9 wherein the user is able to determine which contact device is available by viewing the
10 profile information on the members of the communications circle and can initiate contact with
11 any member having an available contact device.

1 25. The interface of claim 24, wherein the communications section displays a name
2 of each member in the communications circle.

1 26. The interface of claim 24, wherein the communications section displays the
2 contact devices associated with each member of the communications circle.

1 27. The interface of claim 24, wherein the communications section has a link for
2 allowing the user to view the profile section.

1 28. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface includes the profile section for
2 each of the members in the communications circle.

1 29. The interface of claim 24, wherein the profile section address information for the
2 contact devices associated with each member and the availability of each contact device.

1 30. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface further includes a contact section
2 for allowing the user to communicate with an available contact device in the user's
3 communications circle.

4 31. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface is for display on a personal
5 computer.

6 32. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface is for display on a wireless
7 device.

1 33. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface is for display through a pager.

1 34. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface is for display through a wireless
2 telephone.

1 36. The interface of claim 24, wherein the interface is for display on a personal
2 digital assistant.

ABSTRACT

A shared communication presence information identifies the communications presence of a member of a communications circle. Upon determining the communications presence of a member of the communications circle, that member can be immediately contacted through an activated contact device associated with the member.

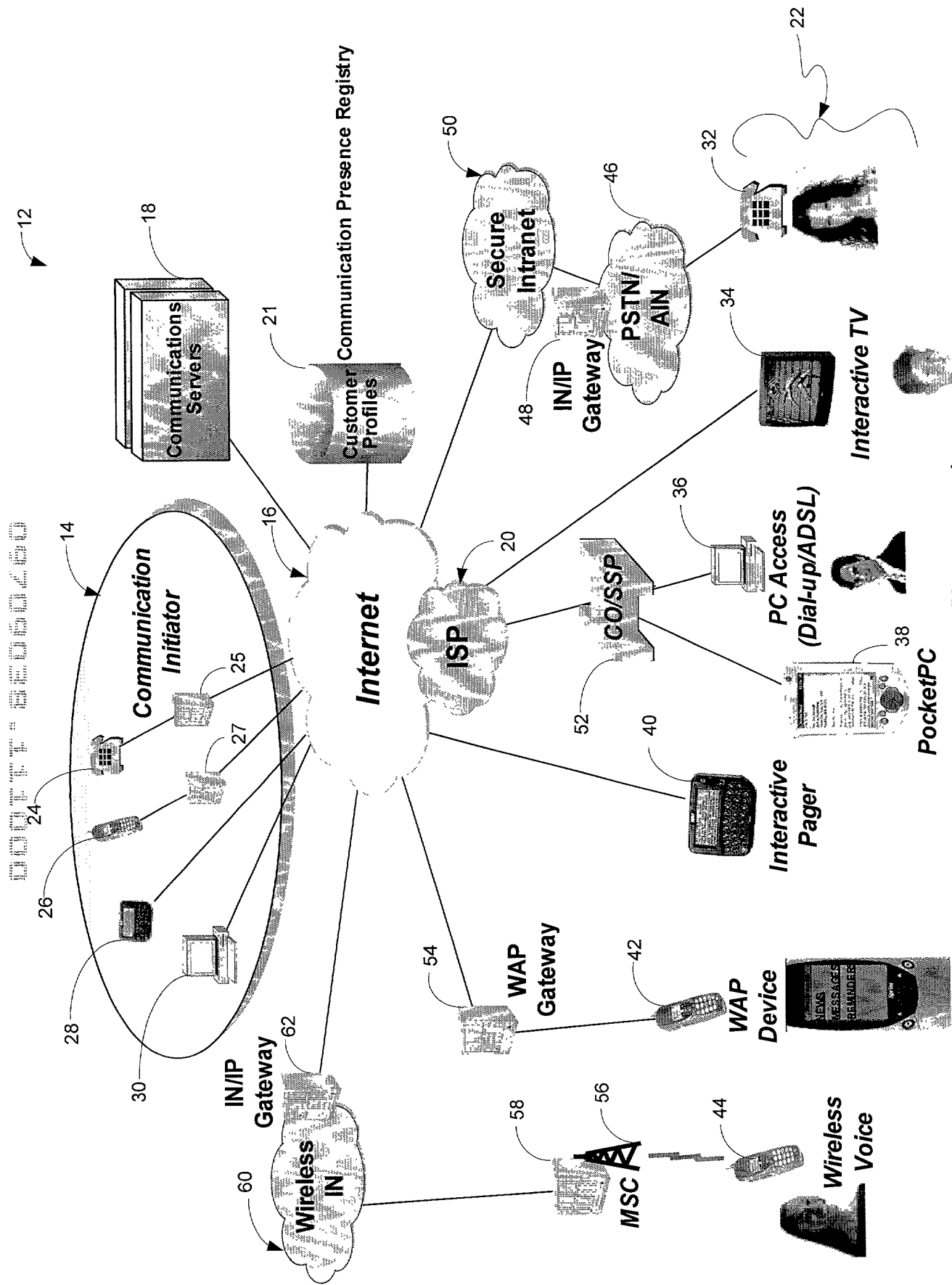


Figure 1

Figure 2

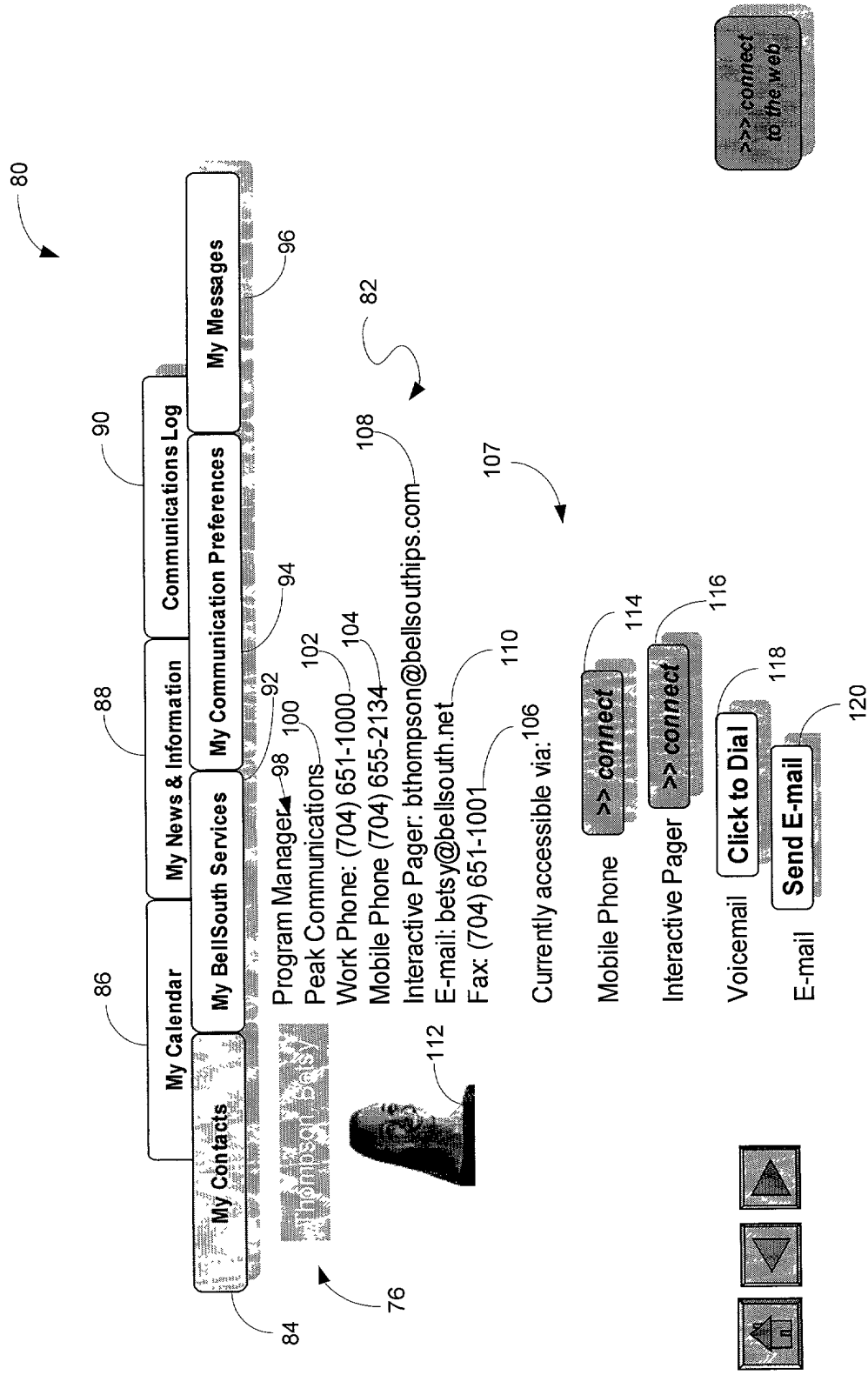


Figure 3

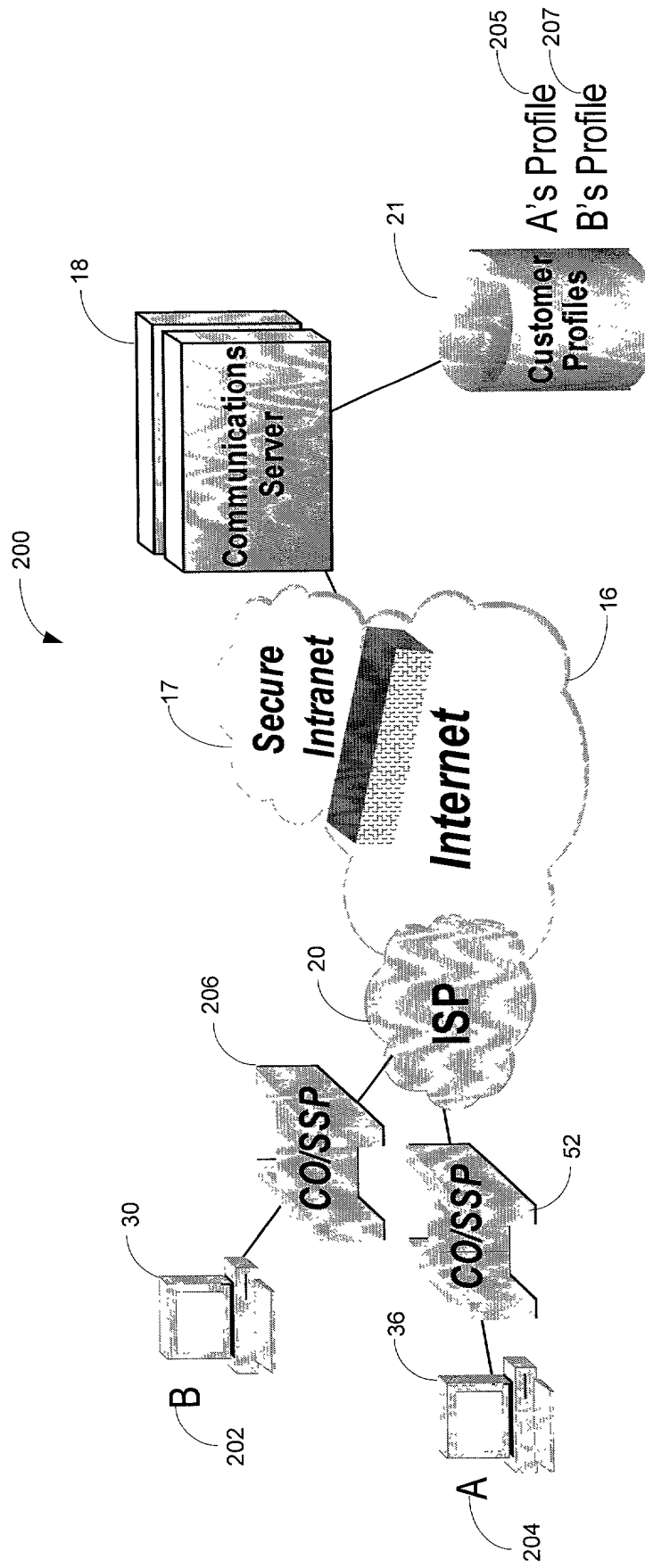


Figure 4

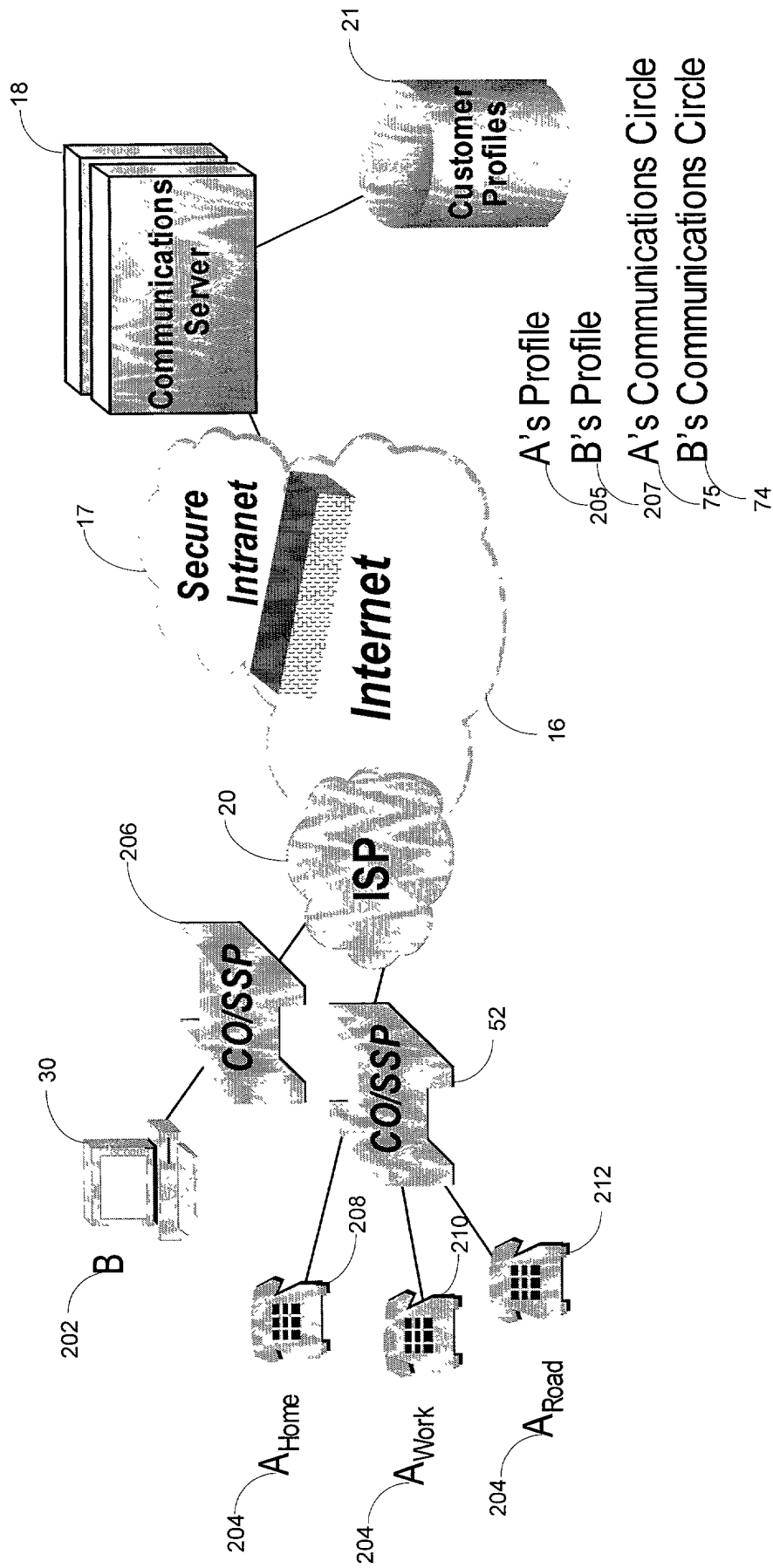


Figure 6

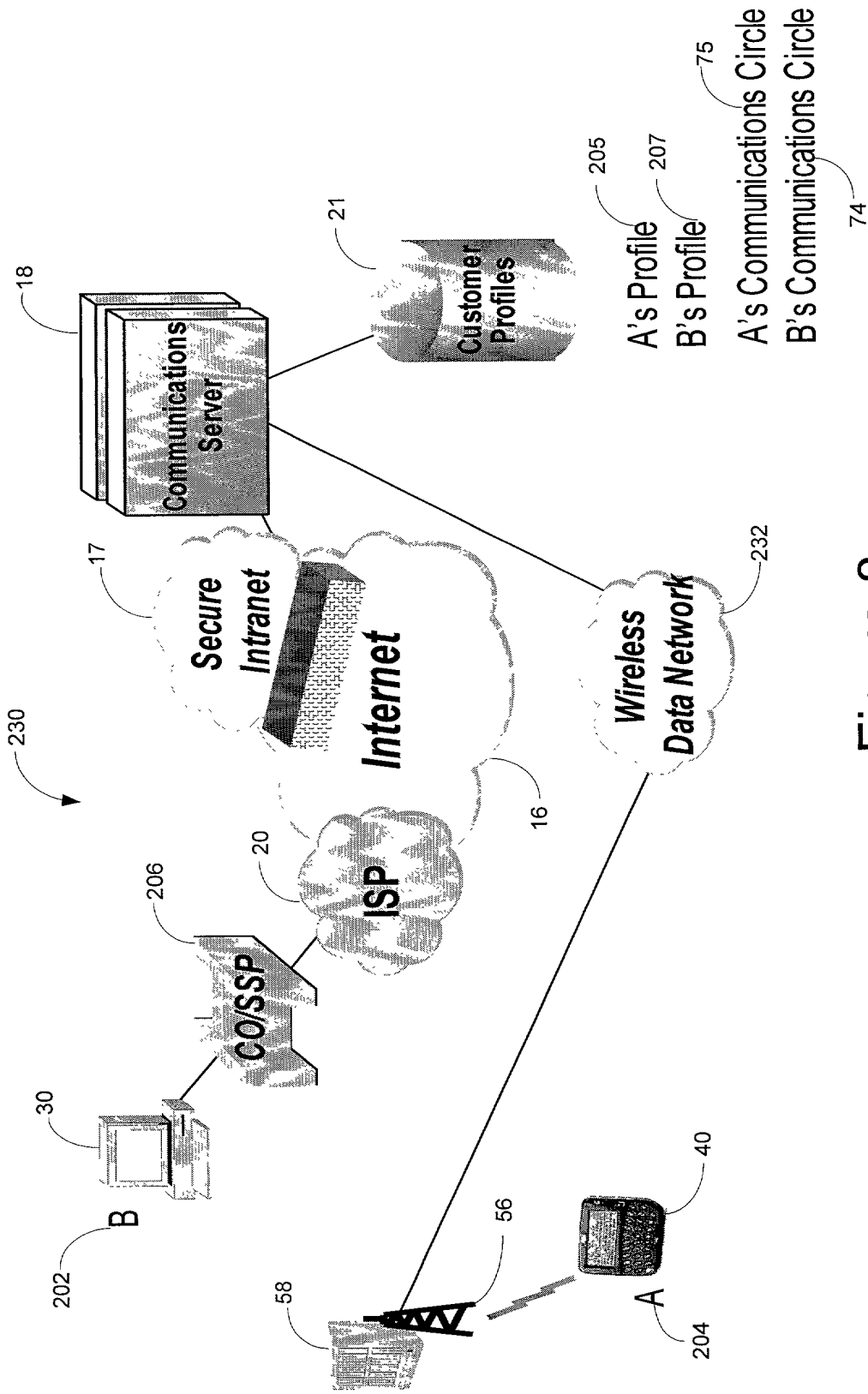


Figure 8

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION☒ Original☐ Supplemental☐ Substitute☐ PCT

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below), or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

SHARED COMMUNICATION PRESENCE INFORMATION**(Title of the Invention)**

the specification of which (check one)

☒ is attached hereto☐ was filed on _____ as U. S. Application Serial Number or PCT

International Application Number _____

and was amended _____

(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 (a) - (d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified, by checking the box below, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Applications			Priority Claimed		Copy Attached	
Application Number	Country	Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	YES	NO	YES	NO

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below and claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT international application(s) designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application(s) in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Parent Application Number	Filing Date	Status (Mark Appropriate Column Below)		
		Patented	Pending	Abandoned

As a named inventor, I hereby revoke all prior powers and appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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For: **SHARED COMMUNICATION PRESENCE INFORMATION**

Declaration for Patent Application

Page 3

I acknowledge the above-listed attorneys and agents and their firm Kilpatrick Stockton LLP represent my employer (if I am an employee and this application has been or will be assigned to my employer) or the entity with which I have contracted (if I am an independent contractor and this application has been or will be assigned to such entity) and in such cases do not represent me individually. I further acknowledge I have not established, nor will I seek to establish, any personal attorney/client relationship with Kilpatrick Stockton LLP in connection with this application and understand that, should I require legal representation, I will obtain such, at my expense, other than through Kilpatrick Stockton LLP.

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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